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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [XW](#) [SO](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: ANOTHER "HOLY" PEACE AGREEMENT IGNORED: SOMALIS
SIGN PEACE DEAL LAST WEEK, CONTINUE FIGHTING THIS WEEK

Classified By: Political Counselor David Rundell
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) In one of dozens of attempts to end the sixteen-year civil war, Somali leaders signed a peace agreement on September 16 in the presence of King Abdullah and Crown Prince Sultan during the final session of the Somali reconciliation conference in Jeddah. The reconciliation conference was initially held in Mogadishu for the current Somali government and thousands of civic leaders-- only the final session was held in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, a simultaneous peace conference is being held in Eritrea by the Islamist-led opposition because the 191 member-strong opposition banned the Mogadishu reconciliation conference. The opposition groups were not signatories to the Jeddah agreement. The Somali leaders who did come to Saudi Arabia-- including the Somali President Abdullah Yusuf, Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Gedi, and Somali Parliament Speaker Adam Mohammed Nur-- first visited the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in order to pray and to take an oath for implementing the final resolutions, before signing the peace agreement in Jeddah.

¶2. (U) According to media reports, King Abdullah told the delegates that "by the Grace of God, an agreement has been reached in this holy month and this will close the bloody chapter and open the road to a bright future." Saudi media editorials commented on the complexity of the Somali situation given tribal allegiances, continually evolving conflict, mixed messages from its neighbors and the West, and the difficulty in solving the conflict "overnight." These editorials also noted Saudi Arabia's recent role in regional peace-brokering-- and how it ultimately has failed in each circumstance.

¶3. (U) Two weeks after this landmark agreement, fighting continues in Mogadishu and the Islamist opposition continues to strategize in Asmara, according to various media sources. Reports about weak and understaffed Ugandan peacekeeping troops continue to publicize the lack of commitment from African and Arab countries for a strong, stabilizing peacekeeping force. There have been no commitments from the Arab States for additional peacekeepers in Somalia.

¶4. (C) SAG Ministry of Foreign Affairs official told Poloff on September 26 that the SAG was very concerned about regional security and stability and therefore resolving the conflict in Somalia was in the SAG's national interest. He was optimistic that the agreement would hold, but added that we should know for certain in another month or two. Even if the effort to make peace was likely to fail, he said that it was the SAG's duty to assist the Somalis as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and because of the resources it has at its disposal.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Given the SAG's lack of involvement in the

entire reconciliation process, and the fact that the violence did not cease following the signing of the agreement, it does not seem likely that this agreement will carry any more weight than previous agreements. However, despite the disappointment of the Mecca Accord, Saudi Arabia has stepped out yet again unilaterally to use its position as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in an attempt to persuade fighting factions to come to peace. END COMMENT.
FRAKER